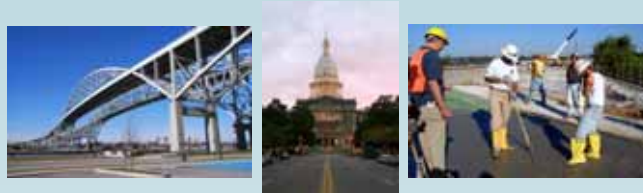**Michigan Department of Transportation**
**Office of Research & Best Practices**

# 2008 Research Summit

Wednesday, October 1, 2008
Lansing Center
Lansing, Michigan

**Meeting
Highlights and
Documentation**

**MDOT**
Michigan Department of Transportation

**RBP**
OFFICE OF RESEARCH &
BEST PRACTICES

# Michigan Department of Transportation
# Office of Research & Best Practices

2008 Research Summit
Meeting Highlights and Documentation

October 1, 2008 — Lansing, Michigan


## Purpose

Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is working on the FY 2010-2011 biennial program for the State Planning and Research (SPR), Part II, Program. MDOT's Office of Research & Best Practices (ORBP), administers this program; details on the purpose, procedures and timelines for the SPR, Part II, Program are presented in ORBP's Research & Implementation Administration Manual, available online at http://michigan.gov/mdotresearch.

An important step in the development of MDOT's SPR, Part II, research program is the inclusion of Michigan transportation research stakeholders in the formation of problem statements to address MDOT's critical research needs. To this end, ORBP hosted a Research Summit in Lansing on October 1, 2008. The approximately 125 attendees (Appendix 1) included an array of MDOT staff and numerous representatives from research universities across Michigan, as well as participants from FHWA, private contracting firms and university transportation centers.

## Meeting Highlights

The Research Summit meeting agenda (Appendix 2) featured a number of presentations (Appendices 3.1–3.8) and covered a range of topics:

- *Call to Action.*
  MDOT director Kirk Steudle greeted the attendees and discussed the importance of research as the leading edge of change for Michigan's transportation system.

- *Technology Transfer.*
  MDOT researchers presented a sampling of high-value research conducted and implemented in Michigan that has yielding benefits.

- *Executive Need.*
  MDOT chief operating officer Larry Tibbits described a meeting in August of MDOT executives ― the Research Executive Committee (REC). The REC identified some sixty research needs or issues critical to MDOT in short-term and long-term. The needs (Appendix 4) were grouped into five broad "strategic themes."

- *Working Groups.*
  As directed by Engineer of ORBP Calvin Roberts and MDOT Performance Excellence Division's Sunny Watson, meeting attendees split into eight working groups. Each group discussed a subset of the REC's need statements, and for each, took the first steps in forming a problem statement by first brainstorming a "research concept," considering these three components:

  - A specific problem suggested by the REC's need statement
  - Possible research approaches to the problem
  - The implementation benefits or value of the research

  In addition to capturing the discussion points from each working group (Appendices 5.1-5.8, as captured during the meeting), MDOT also collected a "parking lot" of comments and ideas outside the scope of the REC's need statements (Appendix 6).

- *Report Out.*
  A representative from each working group presented to the reconvened attendees the two most interesting or promising research concepts.

## Next Steps

As described in the Research & Implementation Manual, in December 2008, ORBP will issue a call for problem statements. While MDOT will consider any possible research project that has a champion in the department, it will focus on those projects developed from the research concepts developed during the Research Summit.

## Feedback

Using feedback forms, attendees provided their input on the meeting. On average, participants rated the meeting sessions from "somewhat useful" to "useful." On average, they rated meeting materials, facilities and organization from "effective" to "very effective." Detailed survey results follow.

| How useful were the following sessions? | 1. Not useful | 2. Somewhat useful | 3. Useful | 4. Very useful |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Presentations: "Results and Implementation Highlights from MDOT's Research Program" | | 2.1 | | |
| Presentation: "Research on MDOT's Web Site" | | | 2.9 | |
| Presentation: "Michigan Transportation Research Board" | | 2.3 | | |
| Working Breakout Groups *and* Breakout Group Report-Out | | | 2.9 | |

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| How effective were the following aspects of the meeting? | 1. Not effective | 2. Somewhat effective | 3. Effective | 4. Very Effective |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Conference format (number of presentations, amount of time for discussion, report out session, etc.) | | | 2.9 | |
| Conference facilities (meeting room size/layout/acoustics, break snacks/beverages, lunches, location of meeting space) | | | 3.4 | |
| Printed materials and organizational communications (meeting materials, logistical guidance, setting expectations, etc.) | | | 3.2 | |

In the free response sections of the feedback survey, repeated positive comments from participants included the following items:

- MDOT is taking important steps in developing its research program and appears to be moving in the right direction.
- Director Kirk Steudle and COO Larry Tibbits clearly explained MDOT's executive vision for research.
- The presentations on the research highlights and on the ORBP Web site provided useful information.
- The meeting provided excellent opportunities for networking and finding overlapping interests among research stakeholders.
- Many participants thought the breakout groups were the highlight of the summit and would like to see this done again in the future.
- The breakout groups were a good opportunity to brainstorm and collaborate.

Possible areas of improvement for future Research Summits include the following items:

- It was not clear to all participants how the call for research statements and subsequent research project selection will actually work; this may require a closer study of the new Research & Implementation Manual.
- The research summit could be even more useful if other stakeholders were included in future, such as contractors and industry partners.
- Some breakout group topics were broad and often far from some participants' expertise.

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# List of Appendices

1. Research Summit attendees

2. Meeting agenda

3. Presentations

    3.1. *Welcome*
    Calvin Roberts, Engineer of MDOT Office of Research & Best Practices

    3.2. *Research Leads Change*
    Kirk Steudle, MDOT Director

    3.3. *Dynamic Late Lane Merge System*
    Dale Spencley, MDOT Department of Operations
    Jeff Grossklaus, MDOT Metro Region Traffic and Safety

    3.4. *Live Loading on Bridges in Michigan*
    Roger Till, MDOT Division of Construction & Technology
    Rebecca Curtis, MDOT Division of Construction & Technology

    3.5. *Research on MDOT's Web Site*
    Angela Nelson, Office of Research & Best Practices

    3.6. *Update on MTRB and TRIM*
    Ron Harichandran, Chairperson of MTRB

    3.7. *Executive Research Priorities*
    Larry Tibbits, MDOT Chief Operations Officer
    Leon Hank, MDOT Chief Administrative Officer

    3.8. *Taking the Next Step: Today's Breakout Groups*
    Calvin Roberts, Engineer of MDOT Office of Research & Best Practices
    Sunny Watson for Mark Becker, MDOT Performance Excellence Division

4. MDOT Research Executive Committee's strategic themes and need statements

5. Working group discussion points

    5.1. Working Group 1, *Safety*
    5.2. Working Group 2, *Renewal and Sustainability*
    5.3. Working Group 3, *Renewal and Sustainability*
    5.4. Working Group 4, *Organizational Effectiveness*
    5.5. Working Group 5, *Organizational Effectiveness*
    5.6. Working Group 6, *Mobility*
    5.7. Working Group 7, *Mobility*
    5.8. Working Group 8, *Environmental Accountability*

6. Parking Lot ideas